GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5162
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2012
FREE TO AIR TV PAID CHANNELS
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria followed by Doordarshan/private cable operators in allocation of channels to the consumers for free to air TV/paid channels;

(b) whether a cutthroat competition is prevailing amongst the private cable operators in offering free to air TV/paid channels to the consumers;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the monitoring mechanism in place to create a level playing field for all the private cable operators; and the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that the consumers are not charged hidden cost while offering these channels for viewing?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C. M. JATUA)

(a) to (e) Doordarshan is not operating any cable distribution system. Doordarshan's all channels are free-to-air and are being carried by Private Cable Operators and DTH Operators as well.

The tariff payable by cable subscribers to cable operators in non CAS areas has been prescribed, by the Telecommuni cation (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Second) Tariff Order, 2004 dated 1.10.2004 as amended from time to time, in the form of ceilings. These prescribed ceilings (excluding taxes) are based on the number of pay channels and Free to Air (FTA) channels being transmitted or retransmitted for different categories of cities, towns and other habitations. Further, a 7% increase has been allowed towards inflation linked hike as per the "Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Second) Tariff (Ninth Amendment) Order, 2008 dated 26.12.2008. The ceilings on charges payable by a subscriber to the cable operator or multi system operator in Non-CAS areas are attached here as Annexure. As on date, the enclosed ceilings are still in force in the non CAS areas.

The tariff for CAS areas has been prescribed by the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Third) (CAS Areas) Tariff order, 2006 dated 31.8.2006 as amended from time to time. In CAS areas, the ceiling in respect of maximum retail prices (MRP) payable by a subscriber to multi system operator/cable operator was prescribed five rupees per pay channel per month (exclusive of taxes) and Rs. 77/- (excluding taxes) for the Basis Service Tier consisting of a minimum of 30 Free-to-Air (FTA) channels. Further, a 7% increase has been allowed towards inflation linked hike as per the "Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Third) CAS Areas) Tariff (Third Amendment) Order, 2008 dated 26.12.2008 for CAS notified areas of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. As on date, the ceiling for CAS notified areas is Rs. 5.35/- (excluding taxes) per pay channel per subscriber per month and Rs. 82/- (excluding taxes) for Basic Service Tier (BST) consisting of a minimum of 30 Free to Air (FTA) channels.

The tariff for Addressable Systems has been prescribed by the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Forth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order 2010 dated 21.7.2010 as amended from time to time. In all addressable platforms, the retail tariff is under forbearance. For Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems, if a subscriber opts only for FTA channels, then he may choose BST (of minimum of 100 FTA channels) or 100 FTA channels available on the operator's platform. For this the operator can charge a maximum of Rs. 100/- per month. In case, the subscriber opts for one or more pay channels, with or without BST or other FTA channels, the operator can charge a minimum mon thly subscription not exceeding Rs. 150/- per month. In DTH platform, in case the service provider is fixing mini mum onthly subscription amount, the same cannot exceed Rs. 150/- per month per subscriber.

However, if the total value of the pay channels/bouquet opted with or FTA channels, exceeds Rs. 150/-, then actual subscription charges has to be paid. without